

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IGA-01 FBO-02 A-01 OC-05

CCO-00 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 IO-10 /081 W

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O R 280345Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4606

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL UDORN

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CDR USSAG/7TH AF NKP

13TH AF CC CLARK AFB

13TH ADVON CC UDORN

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 4598

BANGKOK ALSO FOR RAMSEY, USAID/LAOS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR LA US

SUBJ: DEMONSTRATORS OCCUPY EMBASSY GSO COMPOUND AND USIS
FACILITIES

SUMMARY: SHORTLY AFTER 0200 HOURS LOCAL JUNE 28 PROTESTORS
OCCUPIED EMBASSY GSO COMPOUND AND ALSO STATIONED GUARDS AT
GATE OF ADJACENT STAFF HOUSING COMPLEX KNOWN AS SILVER CITY.
THEY ATTEMPTED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO OBTAIN KEYS TO BUILDINGS
ON COMPOUND FROM MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR REPS. WE GOT
FOREIGN MINISTER'S CHEF DE CABINET OUT OF BED AT 0345 AND
OBTAINED HIS AGREEMENT TO MEET AT SITE AT 0600. WE IMMEDI-
ATELY OBTAINED PERMISSION FOR TDY PERSONNEL RETURNING TO
BANGKOK TO LEAVE SILVER CITY IN ORDER TO CATCH EARLY
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MORNING FLIGHT AND SOON AFTER ESTABLISHED FREEDOM OF

MOVEMENT FOR EMPLOYEES WHO LIVE IN SILVER CITY. THIS
AGREEMENT HAS SO FAR HELD TO EXTENT THAT EMPLOYEES HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO COME TO CHANCERY.

FOR TIME BEING DEMONSTRATORS REMAIN IN GSO COMPOUND
PROPER. SOME OF THEM ARE FROM USAID PROTEST COMMITTEE
AND THEY APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT USAID PROPERTY "WHICH
NOW BELONGS TO PEOPLE OF LAOS" IS STORED THERE. BALANCE
OF THEIR DEMANDS, IF ANY, ARE NOT CLEAR TO US NOR, WE;K7W#HC,#K*RN(JR0?=E\$(

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 FBO-02 A-01 OC-05

CCO-00 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 IO-10 /081 W

----- 097884

O R 280345Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4607

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CDR USSAGE/7TH AF NKP

13TH AF CC CLARK AFB
13TH ADVON CC UDORN
CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 4598

BANKOK ALSO FOR RAMSEY, USAID/LAOS

5. AS MATTER OF FIRST PRIORITY, EMBASSY RAISED ISSUE OF TWO TEJ EMPLOYEES WHO HAD TO BE AT AIRPORT BY 0700 TO CATCH FLIGHT TO BANGKOK. THESE TWO EMPLOYEES AND A PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED SECRETARY WHO HAD NOT YET UNPACKED WERE PERMITTED TO DEPART SILVER CITY WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT. MEANWHILE, UAE MANAGER AND POL COUNSEL CONDUCTED SOUBANH, HIS ATTACHE, AND FOUR OR FIVE PROTESTORS ON TOUR THROUGH GSO OFFICES AND FROM WAREHOUSE AND OTHER FACILITIES ON GSO COMPOUND. DURING TOUR, THERE WAS RUNNING DIALOGUE WITH PROTESTORS WHOSE MOTIVES WERE NEVER CLEARLY DEFINED BEYOND SUSPICION THAT SOME OF THE APPLIANCES AND FURNITURE STORED IN GSO COMPOUND ACTUALLY BELONGED TO USAID AND SHOULD THUS BECOME PROPERTY OF "LAO PEOPLE." ONE DEMONSTRATOR
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SUGGESTED THAT EACH APPLIANCE BE CHECKED AGAINST INVENTORY TO PROVE IT DID NOT BELONG TO USAID. TOUR GUIDES REPLIED THAT THEY COULD NOT EVEN CONSIDER SUCH A PROJECT UNLESS OFFICIAL REQUEST CAME THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND EVEN THEN WOULD FIND IT HIGHLY IRREGULAR. SOUBANH, WHEN ASKED WHETHER PGNU FAVORED SUCH AN APPROACH, AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER AND SUGGESTED THAT TOUR CONTINUE. DURING COURSE OF TOUR, THERE WAS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN WHO WORKS IN GSO COMPOUND, GSO HIMSELF WHO IS FIRST SECRETARY OF EMBASSY; ONE OTHER STATE EMPLOYEE AS OF TODAY; AND UAE PROJECT MANAGER AND HIS ASSISTANT. FACT THAT UAE REPS ARE WORKING UNDER CONTRACT WITH STATE AND NOT WITH USAID WAS ALSO SET FORTH. IN ADDITION, HEAVY STRESS WAS PUT ON FACT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER EMPLOYEES WHO REGULARLY WORK IN GSO COMPOUND ARE LAO ON ROLLS OF STATE OR UAE.

6. SOUBANH AND HIS ATTACHE SAID LITTLE DURING TOUR AND DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH PROTESTORS' ARGUMENTS. AT CONCLUSION OF TOUR, SOUBANH SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT EMBASSY HAD "RIGHT" TO DEAL WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THIS PROBLEM AND SAID HE WOULD TALK FURTHER WITH PROTESTORS AND TELEPHONE RESULTS TO EMBASSY DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY. POL COUNSELOR NOTED THAT THIS EPISODE, LIKE ANY OTHER VIOLATION OF OUR DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY, WOULD HAVE TO BE REPORTED TO WASHINGTON. HE SAID HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE TO TELL WASHINGTON THAT

AMERICAN EMPLOYEES WERE IN EFFECT BEING HELD HOSTAGE IN ADJACENT SILVER CITY COMPOUND. SOUBANH WENT OFF TO CONFER WITH RANKING PROTESTORS ON SCENE AND RETURNED IN A MATTER OF MINUTES TO SAY THAT PRINCIPLE OF FREE ENTRY AND EXIT FROM SILVER CITY AND EMBASSY MEDICAL UNIT, WHICH IS ALSO IN RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND, HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. SOUBANH AND POL COUNSELOR AGREED THAT NO GSO OR UAE EMPLOYEE, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY, WOULD REPORT FOR WORK IN GSO COMPOUND PENDING RESOLUTION OF ISSUES THERE.

7. SOUBANH VOLUNTEERED IN ADDITION THAT PROTESTORS WOULD "TOUCH NOTHING" AND THAT NO VEHICLES OR OTHER PROPERTY WOULD BE REMOVED FROM GSO COMPOUND. AT THIS POINT, TOUR PARTICIPANTS WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS. OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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AMERICAN EMPLOYEES WHO LIVED IN SILVER CITY HAVE SINCE LEFT FOR WORK WITHOUT INCIDENT, BUT PROTESTORS ARE APPARENTLY ORDERING LAO DOMESTIC SERVANTS TO LEAVE SILVER CITY AND IN AT LEAST ONE CASE HAVE OBTAINED KEYS TO A HOUSE UNIT FROM A DOMESTIC AS SHE LEFT. EMBASSY MEDICAL OFFICER HAS GONE TO MEDICAL UNIT TO ESTABLISH PRINCIPLE OF HIS RIGHT TO BE THERE AND WILL REMAIN FOR A WHILE, EVEN IF NO PATIENTS APPEAR.

8. SIMILAR TREATMENT OF USIS LIBRARY AND LARGELY VACATED OFFICE SPACE IN SAME BUILDING BEGAN IN PRE-DAWN HOURS. AS REPORTED, VIENTIANE 4596 (USIAC), ONLY THREE ARMED AND UNIFORMED PATHET LAO ARE CURRENTLY AT USIS BUILDING. HOWEVER, EMBOFF OBSERVED PROTESTORS WITH RADIO EQUIPMENT TALKING WITH PATHET LAO OUTSIDE USIS AS EARLY AS 0330.

9. AT GSO COMPOUND AND ALSO IN FRONT OF USIS, THERE ARE NUMEROUS POSTERS MADE OF BROWN WRAPPING PAPER WITH LETTERING WHICH CAN BE READ ONLY FROM A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY. WE WILL HAVE FULLER IDEA OF CONTEXT OF THESE POSTERS LATER IN THE DAY. MOST OF THOSE SO FAR BEGAN WITH LANGUAGE DEMANDING THAT AMERICANS (OR CIA) GO HOME. SOME, HOWEVER, SEEM TO HAVE SPECIFIC DATES SUCH AS JUNE 30, WHICH, OF COURSE, WAS DEADLINE SPECIFIED IN MAY 27 FOR DISSOLUTION OF USAID AND DEPARTURE OF ALL OF THOSE AMERICAN PERSONNEL.

10. COMMENT: AS INDICATED ABOVE, THE PROTESTORS' COMPLAINTS OR DEMANDS ARE APPARENTLY NOT EVEN CLEAR TO FOREIGN MINISTRY REPS AND ARE CERTAINLY NOT CLEAR TO US. THE ONE BEFINITE ELEMENT IS REAL OR FEIGNED SUSPICION THAT USAID PROPERTY IS BEING HIDDEN IN GSO COMPOUND. BEYOND THAT, PROTESTORS MANIFESTED SUSPICION ABOUT

IDENTITY OF DIRECT HIRE AND CONTRACT EMPLOYEES WHO WORK
IN CEUPOUND AND AT ONE POINT SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS NO
MORE NEED FOR "FOREIGN CONTRACTORS" IN LAOS. AS A MORE
GENERAL OBSERVATION, WE SUSPECT THAT OUR PRE-EMPTIVE
ACTION -- DELIVERING OUR NOTE BEFORE WE RECEIVED NOTE
FROM PGNU, ABANDONING USAID PROPERTY BECAUSE IT HAD
PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH PGNU, AND ABORTING
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TURNOVER CEREMONY THAT PGNU AND PROTESTORS WANTED -- HAS
LEFT PROTESTORS "BEHIND THE POWER CURVE." PROTESTORS
ARE NOW HAVING TO CAST ABOUT FOR OTHER TARGETS AND HAVE
FOR THE MOMENT SETTLED ON GSO AND USIS. FACT THAT THESE
FACILITIES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH USAID MAY UNDERCUT PRO-
TESTORS' CAUSE AND PGNU'S WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT THEM TO
THE HILT. WE BELIEVE WE ACCOMPLISHED A GOOD DEAL, EVEN
BEFORE BREAKFAST, AND WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE PURSUING
MATTER THROUGHOUT THE DAY WITH SOUBANH AND WCHH OTHER PGNU
OFFICIALS.

11. WITH DEPARTURE THIS MORNING, OUR STRENGTH STANDS AT 42. WE ARE
NOW STUDYING ADVISABILITY OF MOVING SUBSTANTIAL PART OF
REMAINING STAFF TO UDORN THROUGH MONDAY. WILL ADVISE.
CHAPMAN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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06 JUL 2006

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